

Message Text

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 3716

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, CH, JA, SN, UR
SUBJECT: SINGAPORE REACTION TO SIGNING OF SINO-JAPANESE PFT

1. SUMMARY: SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PROBLEM WITH SIGNING OF SINO-JAPANESE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY, ACCORDING TO MFA OFFICIAL, AND VIEWS IT AS PART OF US-JAPAN-CHINA ALIGNMENT AGAINST USSR. TREATY WAS WIDELY REPORTED IN SINGAPORE PRESS AND ATTRACTED EDITORIAL COMMENT ON REALIGNMENT OF STRATEGIC FORCES IN EAST ASIA. TREATY IS VIEWED HERE AS PRIMARILY SYMBOLIC IN SIGNIFICANCE, BUT ECONOMIC LURE OF CHINA MARKET SEEN AS IMPORTANT IN JAPAN'S DECISION TO RISK SOVIET WRATH BY SIGNING. INCLUSION OF THIRD COUNTRY CLAUSE SEEN AS CONCESSION BY PEKING. SOVIET REACTION IS DESCRIBED AS HAVING IMPLICATIONS AS SERIOUS FOR REST OF ASIA AS TREATY ITSELF.
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END SUMMARY.

2. SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PROBLEM WITH SIGNING OF JAPAN-CHINA PFT, MFA'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL DIVISION FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TOLD EMBOFFS AUGUST 14. SINGAPORE VIEWS TREATY AS PART OF US-JAPAN-CHINA ALIGNMENT AGAINST USSR IN NORTH ASIA. MFA OFFICIAL, FORMERLY COUNSELOR AT SINGAPORE'S

TOKYO EMBASSY, INTERPRETED FINAL CONCLUSION OF SIX-YEAR LONG NEGOTIATIONS TO MEAN THAT JAPAN HAS DECIDED CHINA IS MORE IMPORTANT TO HER INTERESTS THAN RUSSIA. WITH THE FADING AWAY OF ANY REAL POSSIBILITY OF JAPANESE INVOLVEMENT IN SIBERIAN VENTURES, HE SAID, LURE OF CHINA MARKET HAS STRENGTHENED DOMESTIC JAPANESE INTERESTS FAVORING CONCLUSION OF TREATY.

3. STRONG JAPANESE RESENTMENT OVER CONTINUED SOVIET OCCUPATION OF KURILES AND REACTION AGAINST HEAVY-HANDED RUSSIAN PRESSURE ON JAPAN NOT TO SIGN TREATY ALSO PLAYED A PART, MFA OFFICIAL SUGGESTED. NOTING THAT TREATY WAS "NOT REALLY NECESSARY" IN VIEW OF EXISTING SINO-JAPANESE SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENTS ON TRADE, ETC., HE DESCRIBED PFT AS SYMBOLICALLY IMPORTANT TO CHINA AS ANTI-SOVIET GESTURE AND TO JAPAN AS ASSERTION OF ITS POSITION IN NORTHEAST ASIA. END CONFIDENTIAL.

4. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. EDITORIAL COMMENT IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS DESCRIBED TREATY AS RECOGNITION OF NEW ALIGNMENT OF STRATEGIC FORCES IN NORTHEAST ASIA. STRAITS TIMES SAW SHIFT IN STRATEGIC BALANCE TO USSR'S DISADVANTAGE, AND DESCRIBED TOKYO AS "LINCHPIN" IN EAST ASIAN EQUILIBRIUM OF POWER BETWEEN US, JAPAN AND CHINA. ECONOMIC AND TRADE LINKS WILL BENEFIT BOTH PARTIES, SAID STRAITS TIMES, WITH POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL BENEFIT TO JAPAN IF CHINA ABROGATES SINO-SOVIET TREATY WITH ITS ANTI-JAPAN CLAUSE. NEW NATION SUGGESTED BOTH CHINA AND JAPAN SEE TREATY IN TERMS OF GLOBAL BALANCE OF POWER; CONFIDENTIAL

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JAPAN'S EVENTUAL WILLINGNESS TO SIGN TREATY SEEN AS A RESULT OF CHANGES IN "MOOD AND DIRECTION" OF US-USSR RELATIONSHIP AND US "WARMING UP TO THE CHINESE." BOTH PAPERS VIEWED ANTI-HEGEMONY CLAUSE AS BASICALLY ANTI-RUSSIAN DESPITE JAPANESE DISCLAIMERS. NEW NATION OBSERVED THAT FROSTY TREATMENT BY RUSSIANS DURING JANUARY NEGOTIATIONS ON KURILES MAY HAVE CONVINCED JAPANESE THEY HAD NOTHING FURTHER TO LOSE BY SIGNING PFT WITH CHINA. NEW NATION CONCLUDED THAT NOT THE TREATY ITSELF BUT RUSSIAN REACTIONS TO IT HAVE IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REST OF ASIA.

5. MALAY-LANGUAGE BERITA MINGGU DESCRIBED CONCLUSION OF TREATY AS DIPLOMATIC VICTORY FOR CHINA AND OPENING OF NEW CHAPTER IS SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS. CONVINCING THE RUSSIANS THAT TREATY IS NOT ANTI-SOVIET IS TASK NOW FACED BY JAPAN. EDITORIAL CONCLUDED THAT TREATY PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR BOTH TO DEVELOP THEIR ECONOMIES. IN BLAND EDITORIAL TAMIL NESAN COMMENTED THAT "PEOPLE OF ASIA HOPE THAT THIS TREATY WILL HELP ENHANCE PEACE IN THEIR CONTINENT. TAMIL MURASU GENTLY WARNED RUSSIANS: "IT IS NOT NICE FOR A SUPERPOWER LIKE THE SOVIET UNION TO INTERFERE IN THIS MATTER AND INTIMIDATE JAPAN TO SUCH AN EXTENT. IF RUSSIA CONTINUES TO ADOPT

THIS ATTITUDE, THEN EVEN HER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES WILL BEGIN TO SUSPECT HER MOTIVES."

6. CHINESE-LANGUAGE PRESS GAVE EXTENSIVE NEWS COVERAGE TO NEGOTIATIONS, SIGNING OF TREATY, AND REACTIONS IN US, USSR AND OTHER ASIAN CAPITALS. IN LENGTHY EDITORIAL, SIN CHEW JIT POH DESCRIBED TREATY AS A COMPROMISE AND PROOF OF RESTORATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN. DELAY IN CONCLUDING TREATY ATTRIBUTED TO INTER-PARTY POWER STRUGGLE IN JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND JAPAN'S "TRADITIONALLY INDECISIVE FOREIGN POLICY." FORCES WHICH MOVED JAPAN TO DECISION TO CONCLUDE TREATY, SAID SIN CHEW, WERE DOMESTIC PUBLIC OPINION FAVORING TREATY; FUKUDA'S NEED FOR DRAMATIC ACHIEVEMENT TO SHORE UP HIS PRESTIGE IN PRE-ELECTION PERIOD; COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL CIRCLES
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ATTRACTED BY LURE OF THE CHINA MARKET; AND U.S. ADVICE (GIVEN BY BRZEZINSKI DURING TOKYO STOPOVER ACCORDING TO EDITORIAL) NOT TO DELAY SIGNING PFT BECAUSE OF ANTI-HEGEMONY CLAUSE. SIN CHEW NOTED EXPECTED ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF TREATY TO JAPAN AND CHINA, AND CONCLUDED WITH HOPE THAT CONSEQUENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN REGION WILL "BE BENEFICIAL TO ASEAN'S GROWTH."
END UNCLASSIFIED.

7. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. COMMENT: SINGAPOREAN REACTIONS ARE LARGELY PREDICTABLE. COUNTER TO SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ASIA IS WELCOMED, PARTICULARLY IF IT CAN BE INTERPRETED THAT US IS AT LEAST INDIRECTLY INVOLVED. BOTH PRESS AND GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZE SYMBOLIC AND STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF TREATY, AND HOPE FOR BENEFICIAL SPIN-OFFS IN REGIONAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.
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